

THE GONG FU CONNECTION



500 Word Synopsis

The Gong Fu Connection begins with a bird's eye view of the sprawling metropolis of London, and then to a bustling Victoria Station where a young, seemingly troubled Chinese man, Ricky, is waiting for a train to a town in Sussex. Like many young people from around the world, Ricky has come to London in search of money and success. Immediately we can see that all is not well with him, as he sports a painful black eye, unkempt hair and a general air of dejection. A crass and ignorant boss, his humiliating quest for love and a violent encounter with loan sharks all lead him to flee the city. Having nowhere else to go, he starts his journey to find Matthew, an Englishman who once lived in China with Ricky's friend.

With Ricky's train, the film leaves London and we are transported to a farm in the tranquil Sussex countryside. The scenery, way of life and manner of the people are starkly different to what we see in the first scenes. Ricky finds Matthew and is repeatedly surprised by what he discovers in the rural community. But the greatest surprise of all awaits him the morning after his arrival, and this discovery is the heart of *The Gong Fu Connection*.

Early in the morning Ricky looks out of his window and sees Matthew practising Chinese gong fu (martial arts) in a field. Ricky discovers that Matthew became highly skilled in traditional gong fu during his time in China, and is now teaching a small but dedicated group of students in England. Ricky is incredulous, as he left China for the West with the assumption that ancient Chinese traditions are outdated and irrelevant in the modern world. He had come to England seeking a "better" life of high salaries and material abundance in the city, but in the countryside he discovers a community that holds in reverence the practice and beliefs of his ancestors.

Thus Ricky's transformation begins. As he participates in the gong fu training and helps out with farm work, he starts to feel liberated from the pressure and disappointment of his life in London, similar to how Matthew once healed from a personal tragedy. When the loan sharks in London eventually track him down, Ricky is physically and mentally equipped to handle the situation in a whole new manner!

The Gong Fu Connection, set in beautiful rural England, integrates authentic Chinese martial arts and proverbs with light-hearted dialogue and English humour. True to its name, the theme of "connection" is central to this film. It portrays a friendship between two people who at first appeared to have little in common; it describes the continuity and importance of ancient wisdoms in today's world; and it highlights the disconnect between mankind and nature, as well as between humans, that many like Ricky experience every day.